



**A23.** Sri Narasimha Murthy: People have misconceptions about how to assess spiritual progress. There are four yardsticks that I call, a,b,c and d. These are based on Swami's teachings and the Bhagavad Gita. (a) **awareness** of inner joy and Love; (b) **balance** of mind, equanimity, (c) **control** of desires and senses (to what extent have you mastered the senses?); and (d) **dedication** of Selfless Service for the welfare of others. This contains all the essence of the scriptures. Remember that we can be egocentric even in doing Swami's work.

**Q24.** *Is it necessary to teach mantras, slokas and 108 names in Western countries?*

**A24.** Sri Anil Kumar: Please do not do this. Following Baba's teachings is not a religion. Baba said all names are Mine. Teaching such slokas is conversion. Sathya Sai Organization is not a sect. We will invite animosity by doing this. Sathya Sai represents Unity of Religions. God does not speak only Sanskrit, God speaks English also. Use your mother tongue for prayers.

**Q25.** *How to achieve Unity in thought, word and deed.*

**A25.** Dr. Reddy: Swami says that sincere spiritual seekers have harmony of thought, word and deed. Swami corrects us when we deviate from this. Swami says that practice of Unity in thought, word and deed is the penance for this age. If you sincerely follow your conscience, you can achieve this Unity.

**Q26.** *What is the difference between emotion and devotion?*

**A26.** Sri Narasimha Murthy: It is the *Bhava* that leads to *Avesha*, thrill in devotion, and that leads to *Bhava-Samadhi*, ecstasy of union with God. Ramakrishna said that the power of emotion leads to experience of devotion which leads to Samadhi. Ramakrishna used to dance like a madman. His devotees started to imitate him, to show their devotion. Vivekananda said, "Do not be sentimental fools." However devotion is Love for God and is an emotion. But this emotion is free of attachments. We can become mad with joy. Devotion is not sentimental. It is feelings from the heart that lead to the experience of devotion, and it further leads to union with God. Once Swami materialized a matchbox and took out a match and struck it to light it. Then He took out another match, dipped it in water, and struck it. This match did not light. He said, in devotion, if there are attachments, it will be like the wet matchstick.

Sri Anil Kumar: Distilled, crystallized, solid and spiritual emotion is devotion.

**Q27.** *Can a person be involved in business, i.e., in material life, and also lead a spiritual life?*



**A27.** Sri Anil Kumar: Why not? We are all examples of this. Spiritual life is not giving up our daily routines and running away from the world and neglecting our respective duties and responsibilities. It is an attitude, it is awareness and understanding, it is what we do and how we act. If I do my job as service to God, and offer my work to God, that is a spiritual life. There is only one work – God's work. All is spiritual, whatever we do. There is no secular or sacred. All is Swami's. Begin every job with a prayer and end the day offering the fruits to the Lord. That is spiritual life. As long as there is separation of secular and spiritual, we miss the point.

The Interactive portion of the session was concluded; and Dr. Goldstein announced that Sri Narasimha Murthy, Warden, Brindavan Campus, would conclude the conference with a talk on the topic: An Ideal Sai Devotee.

### ***Sri Narasimha Murthy***

Sri Narasimha Murthy expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the program of the conference. He said:

Speaking about Jesus, Khalil Gibran, the great mystic poet said in his beautiful book, 'Son of Man': *we shall pass with the flowing of the rivers, and we shall be nameless. But those who crossed Him in mid-stream shall be remembered for crossing Him in mid-stream.* We have not only crossed the greatest Divine master in our lives, we have consecrated our life to Him. We have submitted ourselves to Him. And He has taken upon Himself, the burden of our emancipation.

Some years back, in Prasanthi Nilayam, it happened that we were sitting with a few students at the feet of Bhagawan. "What is the news?" Swami asked each of them. All of the students replied one by one. Finally, He turned to me and said, "What is the news?" I had nothing in particular to say. So I replied, "By your Mercy and Grace, and the blessing of our parents, we have got this good fortune of sitting at your Lotus Feet. Please bless us so that we find fulfillment in this very life." Swami said, "Why do you want to wait until the end of your life? I am ready to give you what you are asking for, this very moment." "I am ready," He said.

Then I said, "Swami, give us, I'm ready." He looked at me and said, "You are saying that you are ready, but you don't deserve it." Seeing the despair on my face, He said, "Some other time I will tell you why you don't deserve it."

After a few months, Swami came to Brindavan, and one day He was sitting on

